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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KYIV 000976

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SUBJECT: UKRAINE: DEFMIN HRYTSENKO OPTIMISTIC ON POLITICAL SITUATION AND INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EXERCISES

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Classified By: DCM Sheila Gwaltney, reason 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Ambassador and DATT met with Minister of Defense Anatoliy Hrytsenko on April 23, 2007 to discuss command and control of military forces, potential uses of Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior in times of crisis, Hrytsenko's inclusion on the party list of Our Ukraine (OU) in case of early elections, and international military exercise legislation. Hrytsenko repeated earlier questions on Secretary of Defense participation in the Southeastern European Defense Ministerial (SEDM) planned for fall 2007 in Ukraine, issues related to the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) System proposed for central Europe, and policy regarding Iraq. End Summary.

Hrytsenko: SEDM invite, BMD requests

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¶2. (C) Ambassador and DATT met with Minister of Defense Anatoliy Hrytsenko on 23 April 2007. Hrytsenko began the meeting by reiterating earlier requests. He asked if Secretary Gates had agreed to participate in the Southeastern

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Europe Defense Ministerial (SEDM) that Ukraine will host in the fourth quarter of 2007. Ambassador replied that we hoped to have an answer from the Secretary's office by the end of April. Hrytsenko reiterated that he had agreed to host the SEDM in Ukraine at the specific request of Former Secretary Rumsfeld and without the presence of the U.S. Secretary, the importance of the SEDM event would be decreased significantly.

¶3. (C) Hrytsenko repeated his request to obtain data on predicted debris fallout patterns that would result from a missile interceptor fired from the proposed southern Poland site destroying an incoming offensive ballistic missile fired from Iran. Ambassador told him that we awaited the data from Washington, hopefully by the end of the week. Hrytsenko asked whether it would be possible to receive in writing LTG Obering's oral assurances that the U.S. would cooperate with concerned nations such as Russia and Ukraine in several areas. Ambassador replied that he would work with Washington on that issue.

Iraq

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¶4. (C) Hrytsenko asked about the deteriorating situation in Iraq and asked what measures the U.S. was taking to improve the situation. He said there is concern among the public and

politicians about the safety of the remaining Ukrainian soldiers, emphasizing the negative fallout that would occur in the event additional soldiers were killed (note: the remaining Ukrainian soldiers in Iraq are serving as staff officers and trainers).

Military/Interior Command and Control issues

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¶ 15. (C) Ambassador asked the Minister about the command and control of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior. The Minister answered by describing several different scenarios. In the case of serious public disorder, the Ministry of Interior would take the lead, and Internal Troops would remain under command of the Minister of Interior. Faced by a large-scale terrorist situation, the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior could fall under command of the Anti-Terrorist Center, commanded by the Security Service of Ukraine, the lead agency for anti-terrorism. During a man-made (such as nuclear power plant accident) or natural disaster, the Internal Troops may fall under command of the Minister of Emergency. For wartime situations, all military formations would be under command of the Chief of Defense (Chief of the General Staff). In all cases, the president as supreme commander of military forces would lead the guidance and coordination.

¶ 16. (C) Minister Hrytsenko also reiterated that each agency with security and defense forces continues to meet daily during the on-going political crisis to discuss and coordinate their schedules, actions, and issues. He said the possibility of conflict between Ministry of Defense forces and Ministry of Interior forces was practically zero right now. He emphasized that the General Colonel Kikhtenko, Commander of the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Interior, was a responsible person.

Why is Hrytsenko going political? Presidential request

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¶ 17. (C) Ambassador asked Minister Hrytsenko why he had agreed to be included on the proposed electoral list of Our Ukraine (OU) in the event of early elections. Hrytsenko replied that this had been at the personal request of President Yushchenko. Hrytsenko, who had served as the policy planning chief for Yushchenko's 2004 Presidential Campaign but had insisted on not joining any party as Defense Minister, had asked Yushchenko whether the Minister of Defense should participate in elections. Yushchenko replied: normally no, but in this case, he desired respected and experienced people to take part. Hrytsenko clarified that he did not want to be a member of parliament and preferred to remain in the executive branch. Yushchenko agreed that he wanted Hrytsenko to continue his defense reform work as Minister.

¶ 18. (C) Yushchenko had indicated that OU would run a joint listed with People's Self-Defense leader (and former Interior Minister) Yuri Lutsenko. Hrytsenko agreed to be associated with OU because OU had always supported the proposals of the Minister of Defense; it has been the only major political faction not afraid to voice support for NATO membership; it was the President's party; all the main players were well known to Hrytsenko, and, after experiencing three separate governments, he had a more favorable opinion of the OU faction. Hrytsenko did state preconditions before he would agree: he must be one of the top five names on the list; OU oligarch Poroshenko could not be on the list; Hrytsenko would not voice criticism of other factions during the campaign but would only speak in positive terms on the way forward for the future; and he would not actively campaign until a week or two prior to the elections.

Military Exercise legislation

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¶9. (C) Ambassador asked about the annual international military exercise authorization legislation which had been approved by the coalition factions sitting in the Rada April 6 after the President had issued his April 2 decree to dismiss the Rada. Minister Hrytsenko suggested the legislation may be signed into law within the next couple of days by Rada Speaker Moroz (note: Moroz associates in the Socialist party, including Rada Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Shybko and the Rada Secretariat, previously told us that if Yushchenko did not sign the legislation, it would not come into effect, though Moroz has the authority to publish the legislation after 15 days). Hrytsenko added that the Ministry of Defense is working with all local authorities to prepare for exercises, and the Chief of Defense has made several trips to exercise areas to coordinate with local government officials.

¶10. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:  
[www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev).

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